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Report of the Employers' Liability Commission of the State of Illinois. Chicago, 1911. 8vo, pp. 249.

Report to the State Legislature of Ohio by the Commission on Employers' Liability. Columbus: F. J. Herr, State Printer, 1911. Parts I-III, 8vo, pp. cxvii+404; 443; 34.

The ever-increasing complexity of the productive process, due mainly to the inventions and discoveries of the last century, together with a proportionate increase in the vital interdependence of workmen, has emphasized the need of modern legislation relative to the relations that exist between employer and laborer. While the defenses made use of in the courts by the employer at a time when industry was comparatively simple, may not have worked any great injustice to the workman then, it is now quite generally conceded that they often do work injustices in that large number of cases where accidents occur as a result of no fault of employer or employee.

In order to investigate this situation, the legislature of Illinois, on March 4, 1910, passed an act providing for the appointment of a commission of twelve, six being employers and six members of labor unions.

The investigations have followed several lines. The commission first submitted letters to nearly three thousand employers and labor organizations asking for opinions of the proposed legislation. Next the opinions of judges and lawyers were sought as to the constitutionality of such a law. Added to this were compilations of available statistics of accidents and settlements, and reports of investigations of individual cases.

The results of these last investigations showed that while the settlements in a few cases were even sensationally large, the great number of cases in which no settlement was made, together with the heavy cost of litigation and lawyers' fees in other cases, brought the average down to a small sum. The commission then reported in favor of a law providing for the payment of a definite amount in case of accident. This sum is over twice the average amount received under the old method of appeal to the courts. The advantages are obvious. It insures to each workman a definite payment in case of accident, and at a time when most needed. It further provides against the heavy loss to employer and employee due to costly litigation.

Ohio stands as another state attempting to provide compensation otherwise than by appeals through the courts under the common law. The law providing for the appointment of a commission, however, is not the first legislation of this sort in the state, the act of May, 1910, having already somewhat extended the liability of the employer.

The report represents an investigation more extended than that carried on by the Illinois commission appointed for the same purpose. Part I includes original investigations of compensations received in certain parts of the state under the old conditions. In addition to this new material the *Report* also

includes the compensation laws of Europe and other countries, together with statements of proposed legislation in the United States.

The solution offered by the commission takes the form of a proposed bill which provides for a state insurance fund managed by a board of commissioners appointed by the governor. This fund is maintained by premiums to be paid by employers, the premium varying with the nature of the employment. Definite amounts are prescribed to be paid in case of accident. While these are far below the possible amounts obtainable under the old system, they are much above the average that has been received. The constitutional difficulties are avoided by making the insurance optional on the part of the employer; but he is induced to avail himself of it by being deprived of the defenses that he formerly made use of.

The above conclusions were reached after consultation with the best legal and judicial authority available, and after comparison with other laws. In addition hearings were conducted at various points in the state, the results of which are contained in Part II of this report. Further investigations of settlements are included in Part III, which was issued some months after the first two. The report as a whole is valuable in that it presents considerable source material fairly well classified, in addition to the conclusions reached by the investigators.

Farmers of Forty Centuries. By F. H. KING. Madison, Wis.: Published by the author, 1911. 8vo, pp. ix+441. \$2.50.

The investigation of agricultural conditions in China, Japan, and Korea must have been a pleasant undertaking for a man with Dr. King's knowledge of, and interest in, this subject. It is a piece of work earnestly undertaken for the purpose of learning from these people all that is valuable in their long experience as tillers of the soil, and its result is an exposition of methods and conditions of farming which would seem strange indeed to the average American farmer.

To one accustomed to western agricultural methods this description of oriental conditions gives a feeling of cramped and strained living that seems almost unbearable. Yet one must admire any people which can accomplish what they have done under these conditions. In the words of Dr. King, on setting out from the United States "we had left a country which had added eighty-five million to its population in one hundred years and which still has twenty acres for each man, woman, and child, to pass through one [Japan] which has but one and one-half acres per capita, and were going to another [China] whose allotment of acres, good and bad, is less than two and four-tenths. We had gone from practices by which three generations had exhausted strong virgin fields, and were coming to others still fertile after thirty centuries of cropping." Under such conditions very careful methods of agriculture must have been developed to retain this fertility, and that too although the soil in most places is made to yield two, sometimes three or four,